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# Are there relationships between learning, teaching and research in art and design from an academic staff perspective?

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This paper analyses the outcomes of a collaborative research project, involving six higher education institutions in the UK, exploring relationships between learning, teaching and research in art and design.

Through its pedagogy, art and design can be defined as a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) with its own distinctive approaches and methodologies, in which pre-eminent approaches to learning and teaching are inquiry based and student focused (Drew, 2004). Within this context, the implications for the development of students as scholars and scholarly teachers are discussed. The study addresses the following disciplinary contexts: fine art, fashion, fashion and textiles retailing, knitwear, interior design, photography, ceramics and design history.

The research focus explores, from an academic staffs' perspective, the nature and purpose of research/scholarly practice and how this influences their teaching and students' learning in art and design. The research design, an exploratory case study (Yin, 1989), involved semi-structured interviews with 12 academic staff, based on the following key questions:

- What is the purpose of your research? What teachers do and what it means to them.
- How do you relate your research to learning and teaching? Identifying specific approaches and activities.

Reflection on initial evidence prompted additional data collection at institutional workshops.

Brew (2003) emphasises the importance of defining what is meant by research and scholarship to understand the relationship with approaches to learning and teaching. This is key, as art and design delivered by academic practitioners is essentially practice based. The Higher Education Academy (HEA) commissioned review *Institutional Strategies to Link Research and Teaching* (Jenkins & Healey, 2005), recognises the importance of the link between research and teaching, arguing that is it often implicit. In the current climate, with the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) it is fundamental that all disciplines can articulate the relationship between research and teaching.

The supposition that positive research-teaching links are more likely where students learn through inquiry-based, student-focused approaches (Elton, 2001) is supported by this research. Articulating the relationship, staff reinforce the relevance of their own inquiry, to a student-focused approach to teaching, and as a means of fully inculcating students into a 'community of practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Additionally, the research demonstrates how personal inquiry and research informs curriculum design and development.

Findings raise key issues about perceptions, definitions, and the value of research, in a research-teaching context. In particular, the implications for institutional/departmental policy and practice in supporting staff scholarship and developing students' scholarly activity (Durning & Jenkins, 2005; Lucas, 2007), which will have relevance for the future of art and design in the post RAE 2008 environment.

### Rationale and focus

There is much discussion in the UK around the relationship between research and teaching in higher education. Highlighted by a significant HEA-funded project into institutional strategies to link teaching and research (Jenkins & Healey, 2005), further momentum has resulted from institutional HEFCE funding in 2006/07 to support the development of research-informed teaching (RIT). This paper draws from a collaborative research project funded by the Art Design Media Subject Centre of the Higher Education Academy (ADM-HEA) exploring relationships between learning, teaching and research in art and design.

The research, over a 12-month period, involved art and design departments from six higher education institutions in the northwest of England.

Although there is an increasing body of research into the relationship between teaching and research, much of which is comparatively recent, there is to date little specific to art and design as a discipline. The research literature demonstrates a range of interpretations of the meaning of both 'teaching' and 'research' and the link between the two, depending on the contexts within which the research was undertaken and the perceptions of those involved. In defining the focus of the project, the team decided to take an exploratory approach enabling staff in art and design to articulate these meanings from their perspectives as lecturers in the discipline. This informed the key questions for the study 'Perceptions of research and what it means to the interviewee': *'What is the purpose of your research, what do you do and what does it mean to you?'*

The project was funded as part of the Support for New Academic Staff (SNAS) initiative to develop resources on the linking of disciplinary research to teaching. Consequently, part of the rationale for undertaking the research was to discover how staff in art and design linked 'research', however defined, to teaching. In particular, how explicitly this relationship was evidenced through concrete example as well as an understanding of implicit relationships. This

area was explored through a second group of questions around 'Perceptions of the relationship between learning, teaching and research', including: *'How do you use research and how does it relate to your teaching and students' learning?'*

In the interests of the development of policy and practice and future institutional strategy, staff were asked about current institutional activity and support for the developing links between research and teaching and RIT. The project team felt this was important for two reasons; firstly the focus on the imminent RAE and secondly in relation to the post-RAE environment with emerging institutional strategies in which all staff will be 'research active' within a broad context of 'applied research and knowledge transfer'. This is a strategic view of several post '92 institutions where much art and design provision is located.

The final group of questions explored 'Perceptions of institutional support for research': *'How are research and the link with learning and teaching supported?'* These key questions subsequently informed both the methodology and data collection.

The ADM-HEA North-West (NW) Network Group comprises individuals with a known interest in research into learning and teaching in the departments of art and design in the following higher education institutions:

- Cumbria Institute of the Arts
- Manchester Metropolitan University
- Manchester University
- University of Bolton
- University of Central Lancashire
- University of Chester

The institutions represent specialist art schools, a Russell group university and post '92 universities with well-established or growing departments of art and design.

## Literature review

Art, design and media have a long-standing tradition of staff continuing their own practice to inform teaching. It has been accepted as the 'norm', explaining the significant number of fractional and part-time posts, which are a feature of the discipline. This activity has been articulated as practitioner-research, discipline research, scholarly activity and or professional practice, knowledge transfer and consultancy. The conception is that staff undertake this activity for some or all of the following reasons:

- to inform their practice as teachers i.e. how they teach;
- to maintain 'currency' within the curriculum ( particularly common in 'design-related disciplines);
- to ensure a credibility with their students.

This is commensurate with the findings of Durning and Jenkins (2005) and their study based on the perceptions of academics in the built environment. This study concludes that a range of activity informs teaching, from applied research to consultancy and these enable students to learn different skills and develop understanding. Examples included the relevance of research in informing future employability by maintaining 'knowledge currency' and by developing professional skills relevant to the industry. In order to discuss the relationship between teaching and research in art and design, staff need to articulate which activities inform their classroom practice. This in itself may require the redefinition of what constitutes 'research' within a research-teaching context for art and design.

In order to bring teaching and research together, we need greater clarity about precisely which aspects of research and scholarship academics are focusing on. It is important to be clear what we mean by research, what we understand by scholarship and how these are related to conceptions of knowledge and approaches to teaching.

(Brew, 2003)

Brew (2003) identifies four conceptions of research drawn from an investigation involving 57 senior academics.

Research is oriented towards:	Research aims to:	The researcher is present to, or the focus of awareness	The researcher is absent from, or incidental to awareness
External products	Produce an outcome	Trading view	Domino view
Internal processes	Understand	Journey view	Layer view

**Domino view:** The researcher's focus is on the solving of problems, which may have been self-identified or identified for him/her. Finding the solution may push the boundaries of knowledge in the discipline. External focus. Researcher not the focus of awareness.

**Trading view:** Here the products of research are in the foreground: published papers, grants, social networks. This is about recognition and reward. External focus. Researcher focus of awareness.

**Layer view:** Research is interpreted as discovering, uncovering or creating underlying meanings. Internally focused. Researcher not focus of awareness.

**Journey view:** Research is a personal journey possibly leading to transformation. Internally focused. Researcher the focus of awareness.

(Derived from Brew, 2003)

This conceptual framework can be applied within an art and design context. Design staff who undertake consultancy work are therefore engaging in a 'domino' view of research activity, which is externally focused and concerned with problem-solving and the development of new ideas/products. In contrast, a lecturer exploring particular meanings through his/her fine art practice is adopting a 'journey' view of research.

Therefore, it is how this 'activity', once defined, impacts on learning and teaching in art and design that is of interest. The project did not seek to differentiate between 'research' and 'teaching' but to view the relationship as a continuum along which staff could position themselves.

In order to discuss staff research activity in relation to teaching, it is necessary to identify a framework relevant to art, design and media. Conceptions of teaching developed by Drew (2004) cite five approaches to teaching drawn from research within the discipline. The subject areas in which staff were based match those of the staff in this research-teaching study.

Conceptions of teaching creative practices	Key Features
<b>A</b> Teaching is offering students a range of practical and technical skills.	Teacher gives demonstrations, instructs students in how to do something then observes students practising. Teacher knows best which skills students need. Transmission is a feature through demonstration.
<b>B</b> Teaching is developing students' critical, practical and technical skills through interaction.	Teacher aims to enable students to develop a critical language by working together in teams to present own work or that of others. Work with individuals and groups to encourage students to develop and express ideas. Peer learning is a feature.
<b>C</b> Teaching is developing students' skills and conceptions in the context of professional practice.	Teacher encourages students to manage projects involving complex problem-solving skills set in the context of professional practice. Emphasis is on learning with others, often with an opportunity for critical debate.
<b>D</b> Teaching is helping students change conceptions.	Teacher emphasises original thinking and conceptual thinking skills. Emphasis of learning is on peer learning and process. Teacher works with students to improve self-directed research, practice and conceptual skills. Students relate practice to concepts and theories or relate key concepts to practice.
<b>E</b> Teaching is helping students to change as people.	Teachers emphasise original research and conceptual thinking skills and peer

(From Drew, 2004)

The above describe approaches to teaching which progress from transmission (A) towards increasingly student-focused and inquiry-based approaches (D&E).



When teachers describe their approach as being more student-focused, they spend more of their teaching time on 'real world' and practitioner related problems. On the other hand, when teachers describe their approach as being more teacher-focused they report adopting a focus mainly on skills development.

(Drew, 2004)

The HEA commissioned review *Institutional Strategies to link Research and Teaching* (Jenkins & Healey, 2005), recognises the importance of the link between research and teaching, arguing that is it often implicit:

... the potential value of discipline-based research to student learning has to be set in the context of the considerable history of research evidence that questions that close relationship, particularly at undergraduate level ...

In the current climate, it is becoming increasingly important for all disciplines to articulate the relationship between research and teaching:

... it is becoming clearer that those students who are not learning in an HE environment that is informed by research, and in which it is not possible to access research-related resources, are at a disadvantage compared to those who are ...

(Jenkins & Healey, 2005)

The definitions of research in art and design as defined by Brown et al. (2004) moved towards a typology identifying four terminologies:

- |                           |        |                                     |
|---------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Scholarly research     | —————➤ | Creates intellectual infrastructure |
| 2. Pure research          | —————➤ | Asks key questions                  |
| 3. Developmental research | —————➤ | Tests relevant issue                |
| 4. Applied research       | —————➤ | Solves specific problems            |

This work was prompted by the AHRB's response to the Review of Research Assessment and perceptions of practice-based research alongside scholarly research, and an informal consultation by HEFCE on definitions of applied research across disciplines.

The outcomes of this project should be considered in relation to this debate and, at the time of writing, RAE preparation.

### **Methodology**

The research takes the form of an educational case study, in that it is an empirical enquiry conducted within a localised boundary of space and time and a natural context (Bassey, 1999). It is a study undertaken by art and design learning and teaching specialists, with colleagues from art and design. To this end, the research seeks to build theory from both a strong understanding of the discipline and educational research paradigms.

The project team agreed that in order to draw conclusions that inform theory development about the link between research and teaching in art and design it was necessary to take an exploratory stance (Yin, 1989). The questions identified relate to both the *how* and *why* research links with teaching and how institutions support the development of the link between the two. In this respect the research deals with relationships and processes around teaching and research in order to gain a holistic understanding of how different factors influence the relationship (Denscombe, 2003).

The case study utilises 'multiple units of analysis' (Yin, 1989). Art and design encompasses a wide range of subjects and it was important to identify a sample that provided an appropriate range of data from which to draw robust conclusions representative of the broader discipline.

Twelve tutors were identified for interview, two from each institution. The selection was deliberately purposive; tutors were actively involved in learning and teaching in art and design (Cohen et al., 2000) as opposed to being 'star' researchers focused primarily on the RAE. The project team considered this important in order to gain a perspective on what is 'research' and its link to teaching from this position rather than re-articulate the RAE definition. Discussion amongst the team ensured a sample of tutors engaged in similar activities from a range of subject areas including:

- fine art;
- fashion;
- fashion and textiles retailing;
- knitwear;
- interior design;
- photography;
- ceramics;
- design history.

The decision to undertake a series of interviews with colleagues from each of the participating institutions using a standard semi-structured interview ensured a consistent approach (Wragg, 1994). Although all members of the team carried out the interviews, the use of the same schedule, key trigger questions and prompts minimised differences in approach. In each case, the tutor was interviewed in his/her own office or studio, which was considered to be the most conducive environment. Each was informed of the purpose of the research, provided with the questions in advance and given the opportunity to read the transcript before it was circulated to the team. All tutors were offered anonymity. The interviews were all conducted within a six-week period in 2006. Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes.

The interview questions selected are adapted from earlier workshops on the link between teaching and research (Jenkins & Healey, 2005). This ensured the outcomes were appropriate to art and design as a discipline and met the requirements of the HEA-ADM and SNAS. Additionally, the questions were adapted to answer the key questions outlined in the rationale and focus and to encourage the respondents to explore their perceptions around each of the questions.

- Perceptions of research and what it means to the interviewee: *What is the purpose of your research, what do you do and what does it mean to you?*
- Perceptions of the relationship between learning, teaching and research: *How do you use research and how does it relate to your teaching and students' learning?*

- Perceptions of institutional support for research: *How are research and the link with learning and teaching supported?*

Following the initial 12 interviews, a series of five departmental workshops were held in participating institutions (two institutions combined for a joint workshop). In total, a further 42 staff attended the workshops from art, design and media. The participants were predominantly, but not exclusively, practitioners.

The purpose of the workshops was to further explore staff perceptions of the key questions and to corroborate or otherwise the findings from the initial interviews. The format of the workshop followed that for focus groups, where, following prompts from the project team, the interaction between the participants yielded a further body of data (Cohen et al., 2000).

Further data was gathered at departmental workshops held in five institutions involved in the project. The approach used was informed by the case study findings. Forty-two participants discussed the links they are able to perceive between their research (or role as creative practitioners) and their teaching. They also reflect on the context in which they undertake these dual roles and the benefits and constraints these offer, and on the impact of research and its dissemination. Representation was from largely practice-based staff in art, design and media.

### Data collection and analysis

Case study interviewees were invited to describe their role from the range of options or to define their own title.

Educator/artist	3	Teacher	0
Artist/educator	3	Administrator	1
Practitioner/educator	2	Researcher	1
Educator/practitioner	1	Manager	0
Other*	1		

\*An artist who makes teaching as part of what he does as an artist

The definitions were not all singular and in some instances were a combination of more than one role.

In addition, interviewees and staff attending the workshops were asked to describe their personal definitions of research, which were:

- practitioner research;
- discipline research;
- scholarly activity;
- academic research;
- professional practice;
- pedagogic research.

Analysis of the interviews showed that certain themes were reflected on and referred to throughout and these have been extracted into five key themes responding to the three questions.

### **Perceptions of research and what it means to the interviewee**

#### **1a. Perceptions of research and what it means to you**

Research as an institutional focus linked to outcomes for the RAE 2008 was threaded through a number of case studies and the workshop feedback. This is indicative of the 'trading' view of research as defined by Brew (2003) and described as:

... because this is a nice solid thing and it fits into the RAE.

The focus on publication was a key factor for staff based in departments that were submitting for the RAE 2008 and this was referenced with an understanding that this may mean exhibition as well as written output, but alongside this was the underlying tension of:

... they find [the RAE] and the printed word much more interesting than anything else.

Externally funded research, the 'domino' view (Brew, 2003), was perceived as beneficial for developing collaborative working practices, gaining sponsorship and involving students explicitly in the research project:

... that is what my work was about ... bringing awareness to people of what is happening and the economics of why.

Subject-specific research was an area all staff talked about with passion, even if they found it sometimes difficult and frustrating to pursue those interests:

Research means everything I do which is art related.

I feel uniquely placed to be able to break new ground within the context of my own work.

These comments around subject-specific research are internally focused and equate to the 'layer' and 'journey' views identified by Brew (2003).

Linking the purpose of research within a number of contexts (peer, course, institution, national) and as a means of generating new knowledge, informing change while developing a research ethos was viewed as important, particularly in disciplines where the tradition of research is relatively new.

Output was sometimes linked to developing teaching material and inspiration for students. The reciprocal process between pursuing research and being a teacher was described variously:

- A design lecturer described research as an essential part of academic life, which had a direct influence on the content of her teaching.
- A fine artist articulated this as personal work, which translated into research and which informed students that staff are engaged in work outside or alongside his teaching role
- Research intricately linked and underpinning the pedagogy of teaching and fundamental to her role as an educator.
- Making new knowledge from research accessible through discourse between the lecturer and students.

This last description is an example of the co-creation of new knowledge between staff and students. Drew (2004) identifies this

activity as 'helping the student change as a person through the emphasis on research and peer learning'. Alongside these approaches is the more pragmatic approach to research:

... it's fundamental ... to keep myself thinking and refreshed and alive to what I am trying to do.

Research as a means of finding ways of creating new knowledge was linked to accessibility through sharing and discourse with different audiences, publication and exhibitions. Passion and determination to continue research in its various forms was a driver both for change and career, underpinning the pedagogy of curriculum development and that there is:

... a natural connection between research into the subject and the teaching of the subject.

The validity of research both within and without the institutions was discussed. As part of developing a research profile, one new member of staff focused on the importance of knowing where to go and who to go to for information and support as part of ensuring the validity of what they do:

Is the research I am doing appropriate in the subject areas and levels I teach?

... doesn't the researcher have to make the results publicly known?

This had led to a discussion on types and purpose of the research, how a wider community perceives this research and how change is implemented as a result of that research:

How do I engage colleagues and students in the process of what I do?

... persuading colleagues as to the benefits of what we are trying to do.

Concerns were raised about the lack of enforcement of research, which some felt was indicative of the arts in general. Staff felt strongly about a number of issues, including the lack of understanding or support from senior managers and overwhelming

workloads. At the same time, staff were clear that research activity is a means of sharing new ideas with staff and students.

#### 1b. The impact of research and dissemination

Staff were generally positive about this aspect of their research and intimated that the impact of research on learning and teaching (L&T) was often immediate and disseminated broadly through seminars etc. The individual experience of seeing 'the light go on in someone's head' was a positive response to the 'why' approach taken to the teaching. Using the research in a range of student-centred activities, including asking for student opinion, was core to some individuals' approaches. Using a reflective log was one approach that embedded positive and negative processes, informing further research. Some staff did not articulate the link of research to teaching at all.

Reflection ranged from personal continuing development to semi-formal mechanisms for reviewing and developing L&T and the focus of the RAE about how the research is presented in a national and international context. Individual approaches included keeping a reflective log and ensuring that the thinking that goes on as positives and negatives of personal research becomes part of the process of reflection, which informs further research. Some disseminated through the research forums within institutions.

Negotiation takes place to identify time for research, but often finding time when staff teams are small is more difficult than the actual principle of having time. Personal management of research within other responsibilities and context was described as:

... you need time to think and reflect on your practice ... I rarely find time to do this in the university, but snatch quiet moments to consider present work or other directions.

The remit to externalise the outcomes of research was reflected by one member of staff who said:

... that is the key to my work, what it is trying to do, get people into galleries who would not normally go and then to also inspire students to gain a real passion into the field.



Externalising research was viewed as an opportunity for staff, and articulated by those in design disciplines (who work with industry) as largely unrecognised. The concern of staff about perceptions of their work was defined in terms of where their individual research/practice sits:

... research activity can enable student development ... a book for which I contributed a chapter agreed to take a student on work placement, then on contract.

One aspect staff found difficult to articulate was what happened to their research. There was a common agreement that the RAE 2008 had been a focus but that many staff had not been included. As a result, their concerns lay in practical issues, and these influenced their personal perceptions about research.

Research contacts enabled access to national and international experts thus supporting externality:

... that is the key to my work ... get people into galleries who would not normally go and then also to inspire students to gain a real passion into the field.

Although perceived to be problematic for some, the dissemination of research findings was identified as a key issue in developing a broader research culture. Linking research to achieving meaningful outcomes and applying that research activity to learning and teaching strategies was defined as:

Implementing change as a result of research.

## **2. Relationship between research and learning and teaching**

Staff articulated the importance of discursive approaches to learning and teaching, which enable them to explore ways of thinking and making with their students. These approaches draw upon the methods of inquiry staff use in their own research as a means of developing an understanding of the discipline, and how this assists students in their study:

D integrates his own approaches to researching contemporary culture in his teaching. He encourages students to use the Internet and access blogs, personal writing and databases but to do so critically.

This reflects the views of Jenkins and Healey (2005) who argue that the link between research and teaching is often implicit.

Staff also stress how a discursive approach enables investigation of epistemological approaches and knowledge systems, which encourage critical thinking and development of the discipline:

R describes the approach to teaching fine art as discursive ...  
experience of his own engagement with his research to the students'  
experience in the studio or workshop.

This is viewed as a mutually beneficial learning and teaching strategy where what students contribute will also have an impact on how staff develop their research practice. By using personal research to inform pedagogic practice, some staff perceive they are enhancing pedagogy and empowering students:

Students are making and understanding the transition from surrogate art world to real art world on graduation.

This reflects art and design in a 'community of practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991), in which students are inculcated into traditions and discipline practices.

Staff link their research to curriculum development in a number of ways; particular research interests have led directly to new modules as well as new courses. This is a form of discipline-specific research undertaken for a particular purpose, in order to meet the needs of students and support other areas of the programme. The process is iterative in that new curricular developments will also prompt new areas of exploration for research:

I started to gather work that eventually became a lecture series used in my teaching ... this was very useful in progressing my research because I would get quick feedback from students on what worked and what didn't.

and

... my research has been the basis of two elective modules.

The emphasis on research in its broadest sense and including scholarly activity and practice was a key message from the participants. The articulation of this varied from currency of subject knowledge to the focus on discipline-related practical outputs to a way of facilitating cultural awareness and remaining at the forefront of individual specialisms:

... it is a fundamental aspect to ensure that you are keeping at the forefront of your personal beliefs on your subject.

Scholarly activity and practice were used to define research and linked directly to methodologies in 'what' and 'how' teaching happens. These were defined as:

... the way I thought about my discipline ... how design students perceive research in the design process.

Teaching-based research changes the way I think about my teaching.

... research in the broadest sense within art and design enables what one teaches and how one teaches, to develop.

Discipline content and context was a focus for all staff and a number linked the importance of discipline in the context of their role as teachers. One member of staff described this as:

Absolutely vital. It's the knowledge acquired through personal practice in art and design that should drive the curricula ...

This experience was directly used to inform approaches to teaching and learning:

... techniques acquired through personal practice ... are directed in the learning environment of the modules I teach.

Staffs' currency and credibility in individual disciplines was described as increasingly important to students and, in one

instance, was deemed to be supporting recruitment. Individual staff made links between pedagogic research and teaching where research-informed teaching was embedded in a specific working context:

... it is a crucial part of pedagogy to maintain a contemporary view in order to 'update' issues and ideas ...

The necessity to consider the relevance of the research in supporting the learner was also considered important, and links the validity of research in an individual context:

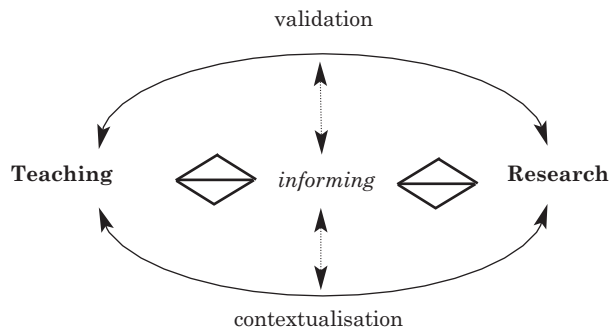
I won't embark on any research I'm not interested in.

There was a paucity of explicit pedagogic links made from research to teaching. Current pedagogy is largely based outside of the disciplines of art and design; this may be one factor and was cited as:

... there is a lack of methodologies (pedagogy) in the discipline.

There is no doubt that staff make appropriate links from research to teaching, but it is less clear if those are underpinned by pedagogic theory, begging the question of: *'how did they learn to do this?'*

The role of research in informing the curriculum and its teaching was described as a form of 'simulation' – of contemporary practices and professional/institutional structures. A model exemplifying this was defined illustratively as:



Staff development activity and professional practice (discipline focused) clearly informed approaches to teaching:

... use of personally acquired practical techniques in teaching elements of practical modules ...

and prioritising and fostering better links between teaching and research was defined by staff as:

... the scholarly activity of theory and practice as a holistic strategy.

This reflects Jenkins and Healey's (2006) emphasis on the increasing importance for all disciplines to articulate the relationship between research and teaching:

... it is becoming clearer that those students who are not learning in an HE environment that is informed by research, and in which it is not possible to access research-related resources, are at a disadvantage compared to those who are ...

(Linking Teaching and Research, 2006)

The integration of research and teaching was viewed as key in supporting subject development but not fully integrated. Staff stated an urgent need to clarify the term 'research' and its interpretation and application. Fundamental concepts and terms such as 'teacher', 'artist', 'practitioner' need to be questioned and problematised. One clear message was that research can be practitioner based and discipline specific and provide:

... a natural connection between research into the subject and the teaching of the subject.

### **3. Perceptions of institutional support**

#### **3a Perceptions of institutional support**

Institutional demands ranging between audit, review, additional roles and administration were perceived as eating into research time during the academic year, thus impacting on the time to undertake individual research, which was completed during non-teaching periods:

... time is a key issue – getting the balancing act between teaching and research right.

For some, research was contractual and time allocated on an annual basis (30 days as a norm). In individual cases, no structured time was available to continue research interests during the academic year:

Teaching is timetabled, visible and compulsory. Research can suffer from exclusive attention required by a combination of teaching and bureaucracy.

Research defined as practice when linked to commercial projects through curriculum delivery was viewed as a positive method of ensuring outcomes for departments and the university – the 'domino' view as defined by Brew (2003). Only one respondent made an explicit connection that research, education and practice are combined in academic life.

Funding was available directly and indirectly. Although not specifically defined by respondents, time allocation to individuals is a cost to departments but few linked activities such as staff development, attendance at conferences etc. as research-related support. External funding through organisations and industry enables professional outcomes that inform future developments in the commercial sector. Some staff were able to access funding through research centres in their institutions, the amounts depending on the activities and potential benefits to the HEI.

There was a distinct variance between feedback from staff on departmental approaches. Some had focused on the RAE 2008 as a driver for growing research, others perceived research as an individual activity. Overall there was an expectation that staff were research active and this was explicit in new appointments. The appointment of a research professor was supporting the development of a research culture in design in one HEI. A key factor for staff was the defined need for explicit guidance on understanding institutional mechanisms for research as a new member of staff.

### 3b. Support for integrating research and teaching

Staff were invited to explore how the institution supported the integration of research and teaching. For the majority of respondents, this discussion moved more towards how the institution supports research. The exceptions were respondents who felt that there was some support through staff development days and research forums:

There is increasing discussion within the institution about teaching-related research and this is actively disseminated through the Learning and Teaching Group and staff conferences.

However, the *integration* of research with learning and teaching was not viewed as a discussion taking place at an institutional level:

There was little help to integrate research with teaching and a lack of a research culture.

The link between teaching and research is not yet explicitly articulated in the department.

At an institutional level, the focus within art, design and media appears to be on developing a research culture, rather than understanding how this integrates with L&T and influences pedagogy. This may be a consequence of the discipline itself and its stage of development; alternatively it may have been because of RAE 2008 pressures focused on disciplinary research outputs. There was a consensus amongst staff that it was research that kept the passion and interest for their subject alive.

The opportunity that the project workshops had offered staff on different campuses and working to complex timetabling had enabled discussion about moving the research agenda forward:

... links to academic communities to identify key areas of enquiry ...

but other, more personal and practical reasons were articulated and included:

... getting hold of new resources is very time-consuming.

Some staff indicated that institutional infrastructures rely on so few staff that making realistic research activity achievable and manageable is difficult. Perceptions that developing a community of research was based in particular areas of research and did not include all staff were numerous. This was a concern amongst staff whose research was not visible or defined because it is not based within the same interests as those defined as 'key' researchers. This was particularly concerning in the case of part-time and fractional staff whose employment is often based on the currency of their practice/discipline. In one institution, the lack of career progression was seen as directly impacting on the ability to research.

There was common agreement that an academic is someone who is formally expected to research and/or teach and that a lack of understanding in some HEIs of academic activity by senior managers could be perceived to be bureaucratic:

... none of the senior managers are researchers, but they're the ones who dictate what should be researched.

This developed into expressions of concern about the ownership of the research, particularly where the topic had been defined by others. Staff found it difficult to attract substantive funds for research and this was reflected in the amount of research and sometimes the size of outcomes. The bureaucracy that often accompanied funding reduced flexibility to what approaches could be put in place:

... so a certain amount of flexibility is required.

Staff wished to see clear and negotiated strategies for staff on how much research time is linked to all roles:

Have a clear and negotiated strategy with staff and line managers as to how much research is part of staff (associate) role.

The perceptions of institutions as 'teaching' not 'research' were described as a barrier to developing a research culture and how a wider community perceives the types of research, e.g. pedagogy,



practitioner based, action. The need for more central input at institutional level and improved dissemination of existing research was a key message from staff:

... make more of the research that staff can do ...

## Conclusions

It is possible to draw a number of conclusions from the research.

*Linking teaching with research is important* – it is an intrinsic part of teaching and learning, demonstrating staff's expertise and passion for the subject and offering opportunity for knowledge transfer and student development.

*Staff have issues about linking teaching with research* including the perceptions of how the wider community perceives research in all its forms, its purpose and validity, appropriateness to teaching and time and funding to undertake research.

*The process of linking teaching with research identified by staff* included their learning and teaching strategies, the immediate delivery of research into teaching and curriculum development.

*Staffs' examples of good practice* included research underpinning curriculum development, a reinterpretation of approaches to learning and making research known through dissemination.

*Barriers identified by staff that help or hinder links between research and teaching* are: the community (academic) as a positive but described as a negative when the community excluded some staff; the lack of recognition when research is not visible or defined; the engagement of staff on part-time or fractional contracts; and the management of research.

*Staff perceptions of support needed for linking research with teaching* include developing and encouraging a research ethos in disciplines new to research, growing a culture which prioritises and fosters better links between teaching and research, clarifying what is

'research' in the 'research-informed teaching' context for art, design and media, and support for 'research' in all its forms.

*What have we learnt?* Without exception, all staff wished to continue their research, describing it as a passion associated with who they are as individuals. This was fundamental to their engagement and role as teachers. Future activity was in the thinking and planning stages for many and the determination to continue researching either as part of their academic role or external to it. There is, however, the need for further exploration of the link between research and learning and teaching strategies, particularly pedagogic approaches, as the ability to articulate this using concrete examples was variable. There is the longer-term potential to inform a research methodology for practice-based disciplines that is recognised, valued and sustainable.

Recommendations from the project are:

- redefine what is meant by 'research' in art and design for the post-RAE agenda;
- give recognition to this broader definition and its role in enhancing the students' learning experience;
- create institutional support strategies for linking 'research' and teaching;
- reward through recognition.

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